DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 432 512 SO 030 937

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TITLE Collective Identity Development among Arab-Palestinian Students in Israel: Context, Content, and Process.
PUB DATE 1999-04-00
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Interviews; *Minority Groups; Qualitative Research; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Developmental Sequences; Grounded Theory; *Identity Formation; Israel; *Palestinian Arabs

ABSTRACT

A study explored the process of collective identity development and related social-psychological factors among the Arab-Palestinian students in Israeli universities. The purpose was not only to explore the content or structure of collective identity among this national minority, but more importantly, to understand collective identity as a developmental process which is one of the most dominant among Arab-Palestinian youth in the university. Two sets of in-depth interviews with purposefully selected samples of Palestinian student activists were conducted in the summer of 1996 and the fall of 1997. The five main themes that emerged from the first round of interviews provided the bases of the study's second phase which included more structured interviews with another sample of student activists. Cross-case analysis was conducted on the transcripts by grouping together answers and comments from different participants regarding the same topic. Identification of categories and themes from the first set of interviews followed the procedure of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory development. The second round of interviews probed more in depth into emerging themes; triangulation and validation of these themes was provided by using content analyses of over 1500 documents collected from the field and participant observation. The following main themes were identified in the first phase: collective identity achieved; inequality and group relative deprivation; party identification, membership and commitment; nationalism and feminism in the women's voices; and personal and social development of activists. Contains 45 references. (BT)

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by Ibrahim Makkawi

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Collective Identity Development Among Arab-Palestinian Students in Israel: Context, Content And Process

Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting
April 19-23, 1999 -- Montreal, Canada

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The Palestinian National Minority in Israel

When Western scholars discuss the Israeli political system, they often single it out as the exception in a region otherwise lacking in democratic and representative regimes. If the test of true democracy depends, among other variables, on the way a political system treats its minorities and guarantees them civil, political and national rights, it must be misleading to frame the state of Israel as a Western democracy without examining the status of its Palestinian citizens who constitute 20% of the total population. Social scientists who study the Palestinians in Israel were limited in the research questions they ask and the conclusions they reach, not only by the scope of their discipline, but more importantly by their ideological and political stands regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The most controversial issue in discussing the Palestinians in Israel is their collective-national identity. A brief examination of the different names and labels given to this group of Palestinians by different scholars reveals the confusing relationship between political ideology and scholarship. Israeli Arabs, Arabs in Israel, Israeli Palestinians, Arabs of the inside and Arabs of 1948, are all labels given to the same group - Palestinian Arabs who are citizens of the state of Israel. In the Israeli official statements the term "non-Jews" is used very often in referring to theses Palestinians ; as if they were culturally and nationally colorless.

In an attempt to remedy for the confusion in the literature, Rouhana (1989, 1997) developed a comprehensive three dimensional model in order to explain the conflicting principles which dictate Israel's policy towards its Palestinian citizens and their political behavior. These principles are the fact that Israel was established as a Jewish state, that it defines itself as a Western democracy, and that it has extraordinary security concerns stemming from its conflict with the Palestinian people (Rouhana, 1989, 1997). It is a hypocrisy for Israel to claim itself as a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time. Rouhana (1989), argues that "a state that is defined as belonging to only one people, when its population is composed of two, cannot offer equal opportunities to all its citizens" (p. 40). More succinctly, the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state of Israel exposes its Palestinian citizens to an ongoing conflict between their national identity as Palestinians and their civic status as Israeli citizens. The recognition of their national identity as Palestinians means defining Israel as a bi-national rather than a Jewish state; a dilemma which is unthinkable for the Israeli authorities. In fact, the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state in Palestine was based on the Zionist denial of the Palestinians' existence as a nation with legitimate claim for self determination in the same land.

Unlike many Third World minorities living in Western societies, the Palestinians in Israel did not immigrate to the new system; rather, the system was imposed on them. This distinction is important for three main reasons: First, immigrants who left their homelands and moved to a new country believed in the values of the new system and hoped to be governed by them. Second, while immigrants left their communities behind in an attempt to assimilate into the new society, the Palestinians in Israel remained together as a community. Third, the state of Israel was established to serve the goals of

another national group - the Jewish people - which were served on the expense of the national goals of the indigenous Palestinians (Rouhana & Ghanem, 1993).

The state of Israel was established in 1948 as a result of a war leading to a mass exodus of more than two thirds of the Palestinian indigenous population. All of the Palestinian leadership and intellectual elite was expelled, leaving 160,000 leaderless people under the control of the newly established state. Mari (1978) describes the dramatic change in the status of the Palestinians who remained in their land which became Israel in 1948.

> The Arabs who remained within the boundaries of the newly created state of Israel can best be characterized as emotionally wounded, socially rural, politically lost, economically poverty-stricken and nationally hurt. They suddenly became a minority ruled by a powerful, sophisticated majority against whom they fought to retain their country and land. It was an agonizing experience, for every family which remained had immediate relatives on the other side of the border. [The] Arabs in Israel were left without political leadership and an educated elite(p. 18).

Almost overnight, they were transformed from a majority living in their own country to a minority who was forced to live, work and study in an alien system (Minns & Hijab, 1990). These Palestinians were not only lacking any kind of national leadership, but the potential to develop such a leadership was not even there (Ashkenasi, 1992).

Immediately following its establishment, Israel imposed a Military Government on the Palestinian population within its border which restricted in their movement to certain areas and often to their home villages (Rosenfeld & Al-Haj, 1989). The Military Government was terminated only in 1966, after 18 years of tight control during which, the majority of the Palestinians' land was confiscated using different types of "self made" Israeli laws and regulations. Consequently, the Palestinians were transformed into a proletariat class "working mainly in low-skill jobs, living in overgrown villages with limited economic activity of their own" (Graham-Brown, 1984 p. 38).

Palestinian Collective Identity

The majority of the researchers who study the collective identity of the Palestinians in Israel, according to the Rouhana (1985), agrees on four basic elements : 1) Few individuals will chose the term "Israeli" or "Israeli Arab" to describe themselves. 2) There is an increased tendency among Palestinians in Israel to chose the term "Palestinian" since the mid 1970s. 3) National identity is the most important component of the collective identity structure. 4) The terms "Palestinian" and "Israeli" are negatively correlated in their use. This research on Palestinian collective identity has been focusing mainly on the label chosen by participants to indicate their collective identification and subsequently comparing several foci of identity particularly the national and civic identities (Hofman, 1977, Hofman and Rouhana, 1976, Hofman and Beit-Hallahmi, 1979, Hofman, Beit-Halahmi and Hetz-Lazarowitz, 1982, Zak, 1976).

Two major models have been used in the study of collective identity among the Palestinians in Israel. First, the *conflict model* assumes that the Palestinian and Israeli sub-identities must be in conflict. Rouhana (1985), rejects this model and argues that the state of Israel, being a Jewish state does not offer the Palestinians in its midst a true choice to adopt an Israeli identity. He distinguishes between instrumental and sentimental aspects of the collective identity. Since Israel can offer only instrumental identification for its Palestinian citizens, there is no bases for the conflict between this identification and their sentimental identification with the Palestinian people at large. Second, the *accommodation model* assumes that Palestinization and Israelization are not mutually exclusive and can develop among the Palestinian population at the same time. The Israelization component, is mistakenly applied to the Palestinians' struggle for equality within the Israeli system - the only government which is legally responsible for them. This political struggle for equal rights within the Israeli system should not be mistaken for acceptance of the Israeli identity. The political developments and identity composition among the Palestinians in Israel are largely influenced by the Palestinian Israeli conflict as a whole. Their political

stands and definition of their national identity correspond to the larger developments among the Palestinian people in the West Bank and elsewhere.

While most of the research focused on the content and structure of the Palestinian collective identity, the process by which this identity is developed, constructed or manipulated seems to receive less attention. Here we can differentiate between two levels of analysis. First, macro level social and political processes aim at manipulating and shaping specific type of collective identity among the Palestinians which is consistent with the status quo. The most obvious is the conflict over the educational system as an instrument for the transmission of "politically defined" content of collective identity to Palestinian students. Second, collective identity is viewed as a developmental process which requires discussing the individual as a unit of analysis. Lets discuss the educational system first.

Palestinian Education and Identity

Arab education in Palestine has always been subject to political control and manipulation by external rulers. During the mandate period, and more so during the Turkish rule, it was controlled by authorities that represented different cultures and nationalities. The situation involving Palestinian education in Israel is even more polarized. In the current state of affairs, Palestinian education in Israel is nothing less than political in nature. While the Palestinians try to use their educational process in order to preserve their collective identity and instill national pride in their youth, the Israeli authorities retain antithetical goals. The importance of the educational system in shaping the Palestinian collective consciousness lead the Israeli government to insist on maintaining tight control over the entire educational process and its content (Graham-Brown, 1984). After a critical review of the reproduction theories, Henry Giroux (1983) points out their limitation by overemphasizing the idea of "domination" and consequently neglecting the importance of the "human agent" in resisting this domination. As will be shown in this paper, the resistance theory provide a better insight into the process by which Palestinian students especially in college, actively reject the Israelization process imposed on them and reassert their Palestinian national identity.

Time and again, Israel compliments itself for the relatively high level of educational achievement among its Palestinians citizens , but intentionally overlooks the question relative to who? This is true when they are compared to their own situation in Palestine before 1948. But this comparison is essentially invalid and lacks merit. Instead, two more pertinent comparisons need to be conducted. Firstly, we should compare the educational achievements of the Palestinians in Israel to that of the Israeli Jewish population, for it is the Jewish population in Israel who, in terms of occupational and educational attainment, are considered to be a reference point for them. Secondly, if we carry out the comparison cross-nationally, it should be between the Palestinians inside Israel and those Palestinians outside it (Zureik, 1979). Both, Israel's Jewish population and the Palestinians in Diaspora are educationally better off than the Palestinians in Israel.

Education in pluralistic societies may be used to create a shared collective identity that encompasses the various groups while maintaining their group differences. This is true when both the majority and minority groups can identify with the national and ideological goals of the state. When we have a state that was explicitly established to serve the collective needs of one ethnic group, and in the process colonized and fragmented the indigenous group, education becomes a source of conflict rather than a nation-building institution. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians in its midst adhere to full integration of the Palestinian community into the state's national goals. Israel, as a "Jewish state" cannot offer the Palestinians a full and genuine partnership. Due to the pervasive nature of the state's Zionist ideology, the Palestinians within it cannot be full Israelis. In this state of affairs, the government carefully manipulates and controls their educational system and its goals with the aim to create a quiescent and politically impotent national minority.

In describing the conflict over the Palestinian education in Israel, Nakhleh (1979), argues that "like any other system of values, the educational system is a highly manipulatable tool which can be used by those in control to instill the desirable goals" (p. 10). This situation is potentially conflictive. As Nakhleh further maintains, the "dominated minorities also tend to manipulate the educational system for their own goals. But to have control over it, that is to have it guided by the consciousness of the dominated minority, demands revolutionary action" (p. 11). Marie (1987), identifies a "deep conflict of interests between the state educational system and the cultural, economic, and national needs of the Arab minority as these needs are met by education" (p. 35). The interests of the two groups in the field of education are incompatible with each other. Moreover, the relationship is between one powerful and another powerless group, with the state of Israel having the upper hand. Under these circumstances, Graham-Brown (1984), asserts that: "In so asymmetrical power structure it was evident that the priorities of the Zionist state would determine how Palestinians should be educated" (p. 41).

In the early years of the state's existence, Israeli curriculum planners for the Palestinian schools had to deal with a critical dilemma regarding the goals of Palestinian education. As quoted in Peres, Erlich & Yuval-Davis (1970), Mr. Y. L. Benor, one of the planners, posed a critical question in this regard: "How can we encourage loyalty to Israel among Israeli Arabs without demanding a negation of Arab yearning on the one hand, and without permitting the development of hostile Arab nationalism on the other?" (p. 148). Based on this dilemma is the logical question, "to what extent does it help the young Israeli of Arab origin to see his path clearly and mold his own identity in a way which maintains a reasonable balance in his Arab nationalism and loyalty to the state in which he lives?" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 30). This particular aspect of the Palestinian education resembles the essence of their political status in the state of Israel, especially the status of their collective national identity. In a critical assessment of these educational goals, Nakhleh (1977), argues that "however ambiguous these criteria are, explicitly they are very political in nature. 'Arab nationalism,' 'identity,' etc. were to be defined by Jewish Israeli planners, whose existence was in negation to these concepts!" (p. 30). Because of the conflictive nature of Palestinian education in Israel and the difficulty to define educational goals that will satisfy both the Palestinian community and the state, official policy in this regard seems to have been to suspend making decisions (Landau, 1993). This "non-policy" situation, lead the then inspector of Palestinian education to claim that "the [Palestinian education] system has worked for 25 years without any defined goals" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 10).

Failing to declare formal goals for the Palestinian education did not prevent the Israeli government from striving to empty it from its cultural and national content. According to Mari, the de facto goals of Palestinian education in Israel set by the government are threefold: "to instill feelings of self-disparagement and inferiority in Arab youth; to de-nationalize them, and particularly to de-Palestinize them, and to teach them to glorify the history, culture, and achievements of the Jewish majority" (1987 p. 37). Given the choice, the Palestinians would assign the exact opposite goals for their educational system. They would expect the system to

> Preserve and reinforce Arab national identity - particularly their Palestinian identity - and to instill pride in their own culture, heritage, and nationality; and if were up to them, the education of their youth would engage in condemning Zionism, rather than praising and glorifying it (Mari, 1987 p. 37).

Nakhleh (1980), argues that the Palestinians in Israel need to create what he calls "Liberation-Prone Mentality, [a] consciousness that is created over time, and manifested in daily behavior" (p. 9). This is a call for a cultural revolution in which the conservative aspects of the Palestinian society must be changed from within in order to repel the Zionist oppression and exploitation. In order to create this type of mentality, Nakhleh (1980), further illuminates the essential role of the educational system in such a process:

"we simply need to have full control over our educational processes, from pre-school nurseries to the university. Our educational goals cannot be attained by restricting our demands to an addition of classroom here and a laboratory there" (p.13).

A comparative study of the Palestinian and Jewish curricula in Israel was conducted by a group of Israeli researchers (Peres, Ehrlich & Yuval-Davis, 1970). They compared the stated educational goals of both groups in four different subject matters: history, literature and language, religious studies, and civic studies. These subjects were selected because they relate to the field of "instilling values". Also the researchers justify their selection of secondary school for a comparative study because it is in this level that "education makes it possible to deal with social, historical, and political problems in a mature and complete way" (p. 149). The results reported by the authors speak for themselves:

> The Arab curriculum lays special stress on the contribution of both peoples, Jewish and Arab, to the development of world culture, whereas the Jewish curriculum emphasizes only the part played by the Jewish people, the contribution of the Arabs being included among that of 'the nations of the world.' [Secondly], the Arab pupil is thus expected to serve the State not because the latter is important to him and fulfills his needs, but because it is important to the Jewish people with whom the Arab nation is 'linked by a common destiny.' [And finally],whereas the Arabs are required to take an example from the great men of Israel, the great figures of the Arab world are not deemed worthy of special attention in the Jewish curriculum, but lumped together with the world's great men (Peres, Ehrlich & Yuval-Davis, 1970 p. 150-153).

What such a curriculum does to the Palestinian teacher is not less than frustration and bitterness. The students, however, being supposed to absorb and identify with such a content become antagonistic to the school, the teachers and the subject matter. Consequently, their motivation to study and their overall achievement drop.

Palestinian teachers in the public school system constantly struggle with conflicting expectations of their community on one hand, and their employer, the government on the other. The ambiguity and stress of such a role is strongly illustrated by a Palestinian teacher in the following statement:

> I belong to the state of Israel only in the geographical sense. According to an agreement they imposed on me. I am an employee of the Ministry of Education. Receive a salary. Live here. But in the spirit, in the soul, I belong to the Palestinian people. So you tell me how I can educate children in these circumstances. A simple example - I've run into a lot of pupils here who draw, let's say, a Palestinian flag. Now I've got to tell the pupil that this is forbidden. But the pupil will consider me a traitor. And maybe I'll also feel that I'm a traitor. But if I show any approval of his picture maybe they'll fire me, or summon me f or an investigation. So what do I do? I don't tell him anything. I pretend that I don't notice (Grossman, 1992 p. 50).

To pretend that they did not notice their students' work does not release the Palestinian teachers from their role conflict. Their frustration continues to determine the ambiguous messages they convey to their students. Consequently, the students lose trust in their teachers as social models with whom they can identify.

Nonformal Education

The repression of Palestinian national identity through the formal educational system does not, of course, reproduce a submissive generation of Palestinian youth shaped by the status quo. Since the government has the upper hand regarding the definition of the formal educational goals, the Palestinians turned to an informal educational setting for that matter. As outlined by Mari (1987),

> In community and cultural centers, clubs, and other ad hoc activities - as well as consistent effort by political groups and parties - the relevant content of identity, nationality and culture have been transmitted to a younger generation hungry for such knowledge (p. 38).

Palestinian indigenous organizations involved in informal education are neither established by the government nor acquire its blessing and recognition. According to

Nakhleh (1991), "these organizations emerged in order to fill the huge gap in the services offered in the social, educational, health and economic spheres, thus becoming a means of liberation and struggle against a strategy of deprivation and oppression" (p. 4).

The contest over the content of Palestinian education is not limited to the formal school setting, where the Israeli authorities retain full control. Informal education has become another ideological "battleground" for that matter. Palestinian organizations are systematically harassed by the government and their educational work is subject to a tight censorship. In Um al-Faham, an organization called *Al-Hadaf* (The Target), established one of the biggest public libraries in the Palestinian sector. As the organization's newsletter reports, it has not been an easy process for them.

> Two representatives of *Al-Hadaf* traveled to Egypt to buy books for the library from the Cairo book fair. The books finally arrived in Lydda airport three weeks ago. Then the Israeli censors wanted to take a look at what we bought. They also like to read. In fact, the Israeli censors liked our book selection so much they took 51 of them. We noticed that the censors had quite specific reading interests. For instance, they seemed very interested in books on Palestinian history and politics (*Al-Hadaf* newsletter, July 1988; quoted in Minns & Hijab, 1990 p.--).

Another source of identity building among the Palestinians is the various political groups and parties. There are some major differences among these political parties in their political programs. However, the main concern for the majority of them is to preserve the national identity of this community as an integral part of the Palestinian people. In his comprehensive survey of indigenous organizations in Palestine, Nakhleh (1991), contends that "a number of national level organizations were established on factional or sectarian bases, whose objective is to advance the views or programs of their specific political faction or religious sect, locally or regionally" (p. 12). Although most of the programs of these organizations, are limited to the political agenda of their respective parties, their contribution to the general process of Palestinian national identity development, especially among their youth participants is very crucial.

Two contradicting educational processes are in competition over the Palestinian student's national identity: identity-blurring through formal education, and identity-emphasizing through nonformal education. In this conflict, it seems that the latter has gotten the upper hand. The Palestinian organizations of nonformal education did not only fill the gap created by the school system, but actively re-built and sustained the Palestinian national identity. Mari (1987), states that

> As far as this specific point is concerned, the struggle is over, from the Arab viewpoint: identity is maintained and reinforced. At least 85 per cent of Arab youth in Israel (irrespective of sex or religion) declare themselves to be Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship (p. 39).

The government of Israel still applies a "computer model" to the Palestinian educational process. By controlling the input of the formal education, it is believed, the output is guaranteed: a quiescent and nationally impotent Palestinian minority. A call for immediate change in this peculiar situation was made more than two decades ago by Mari (1978):

> Unless curricula in Arab schools in Israel are thoroughly rethought and clearly re-specified in favor of the development and encouragement of an Arab national identity which *is not* and *should not* be necessarily anti-Jewish, the Arab educational system in Israel is doomed to a functional death; its curricula will antagonize the Arab community (p. 89).

Despite all this, the curricula used in the Palestinian schools are still empty of any emphasis on Palestinian national identity. The pool of high school graduates from which Palestinian university students are selected "is molded to a large degree by this [educational] system" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 35).

Palestinians Students in the Israeli Universities

Higher education has two major domains of values: socio-economic and socio-political (Mari, 1979). The economic value prevails when higher education provides the individual with potential chances for upward socio-economic mobility. Politically, however, higher education is valued when it is relevant to the socio-political needs of the individual and society. According to Mari, "non-economic values of higher education seem to have special significance to developing societies as they try to develop national and political identification with their respective nation state" (1979 p. 435). The economic reward of higher education among the Palestinians in Israel contrasts most markedly with their counterparts on the West Bank. Mari (1979), found that the average income of the university graduate on the West Bank was 285% of that of a peer who did not attend university, while in Israel a Palestinian university graduate earned only 109% of his or her non graduate peer.

Lack of economic reward is not the only reason behind the low ratio of Palestinian university students in Israel. The poor level of high school education, and the university entrance exams create an additional set of barriers. Graham-Brown, argues that the university entrance exam "has been criticized in some quarters in the West as containing inbuilt cultural assumptions which favor those who come from the dominant culture or social class" (1984 p. 57).

Universities are the only educational institutions in Israel where Palestinian and Jewish students are fully integrated. In fact, it is the only situation in which Palestinians and Jews, as individuals, engage in direct interaction with each other on a presumably equal bases as students. It is because of this integration that the universities find it difficult to apply double standard in their attempt to limit Palestinian students' political activism while at the same time allowing the majority Jewish students the freedom of political organization. However, the relationship between the Palestinian students and the university authorities is conflictive and corresponds to the government's problematic policy towards the Palestinian population at large. Nakhleh (1979), maintains that Palestinian students are politically alienated due to the educational context of the universities being in contradiction with their national aspirations. He argues that the "Israeli universities are dominated by Jewish-Zionist ideology, and this ideological basis frequently gets reinforced by rituals. Such a context places heavy sanctions on an Arab nationalist expression" (Nakhleh, 1979 p. 113). For the majority of the Palestinian students in Israel's universities this educational context serves as an incentive for their involvement in political activism which in turn facilitates the development of their collective-national identity. Despite the low proportion of Palestinian students, their existence is intensely noticeable in all campuses due to their high level of social and political activism.

Palestinian students maintain their right to organize themselves in independent frameworks separate from the General Student Union (GSU). In their view, the GSU is "dominated by the majority Jewish students who do not cater to the specific needs of Arab students so that separation between Arabs and Jews is equally visible in the university" (Zureik, 1979, p. 176). Despite their legitimate argument that as a national minority, they have different national and cultural needs which are not on the agenda of the GSU, the Palestinian students' organizations are still not recognized by the university authorities. This strange situatedness in semiotic space of being neither illegal nor recognized (Eco, 1976), is illustrated in the statement of Amir Machul, the head of the Palestinian students national union. In an interview, he told New Outlook that "the national [Palestinian students'] union is not formally recognized by the university authorities, but there is de facto recognition: They approach us when there are problems, and we approach them" (Machul, 1984, p. 61). Recognizing their organizations by the universities implies a direct recognition of their national identity as Palestinians, a reality which the Israeli universities as Zionist institutions deny and suppress.

It was at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where the Palestinian students had organized their first Arab Student Committee (ASC) in the 1958-59 academic year.

Similar committees have since mushroomed in the rest of the Israeli universities. Following the Hebrew University, more ASCs were established in Tel-Aviv University (1968), the University of Haifa and the Technion (Haifa Technological Institute) (1973), and Ben-Gurion and Bar-Ilan Universities (1975). The National Federation of the Arab Students (NFAS), as an umbrella organization, was established in 1974-1975 (Salim, 1983).

Student groups linked themselves with political organizations among the Palestinian community who shared their political references and ideological affiliations. There is a confining relationship between each organization of Palestinian students and its mother organization in the community. In this sense, the student movement is viewed as an extension of the larger Palestinian social movement in Israel which in turn considers itself as part of the Palestinian national movement as a whole. The main concern for the student organizations as well as that for the Palestinian community in Israel has been to maintain and assert their national and cultural identity within the parameters of their social and political reality. As such, the student activities in the university can be viewed as one of the most comprehensive national and political educational processes Palestinian youth experience. The study reported here, set out to invistigate this specific hypothesis.

Problem Statement

Arab-Palestinian students in the Israeli universities come from a school system that, instead of developing their sense of national and cultural identity, is systematically involved in the process of blurring and controlling their collective identity according to the political interests of the dominant group (Mari, 1987; Nakhleh, 1979). While a few Arab-Palestinian students receive their national and cultural education in their families or through community organizations, for the majority of them the most intense process of national and cultural socialization takes place through student activism in the university. Furthermore, identity as a psychological construct whether individual (Erikson, 1968; Mrcia, 1968, 1980) or collective-ethnic (Phinney, 1989) has been conceptualized as a developmental process most dominant during late adolescence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the process of collective identity development and some related social-psychological factors among Arab-Palestinian students in the Israeli universities. That is, not only to explore the content or structure of collective identity among this national minority, but more importantly, to understand collective identity as a developmental process which is one of the most dominant among Arab-Palestinian youth in the university.

Significance of the Study

This study is not merely another discussion of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Neither is it a conventional ethnography of telling the Palestinian side of the story in another descriptive form. In one sense it could be viewed as critical ethnography (Thomas, 1993) hoping to understand and contribute to the collective experience and struggle to maintain national identity among this segment of the Palestinian people.

As the majority of the research on ethnic identity development among minority youth has been conducted in Western societies, bringing the unique experience of Arab-Palestinian youth in Israel to the discussion will add an international dimension to research and theory development. The majority of the theories dealing with ethnic minorities in the West claim to be intercultural by comparing two or more groups within the context of Western democracy. The contribution of the present study to this type of theory development will hopefully expand their frame of reference by including more domains which are specific to situations of native and involuntary minorities, international conflict and internal colonialism. Furthermore, by focusing on college students as developmentally specific age group this study has a significant contribution to contemporary research endeavors trying to incorporate theories of social psychology

(Tajfel, 1981) and developmental psychology (Erikson, 1968) in order to understand ethnic identity development among minority adolescents.

As for the Palestinian students themselves, the finding of this study are theirs. By transforming the findings of this study into a future form of action-research, the students and this researcher will cooperate in studying their national identity and activism with the aim of improving this vital educational and developmental process. This stage of development is very critical for Palestinian youth. As the formal educational system is systematically involved in blurring their sense of collective identity, late adolescence--the stage of identity search and development-- could be seen as an opportunity not to be missed if the aim is to compensate for this earlier de-nationalization process.

Research Questions

1) To what extent is collective-national identity considered as a developmental process among Palestinian students in the Israeli universities?

2) What are the main social and psychological factors associated with the process of collective-national identity development and involvement in the student movement among Palestinian students in the Israeli universities?

Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by the European school of social psychology developed by Henri Tajfel (1972, 1979, 1981) and his colleagues in Bristol University. Most relevant to our discussion of Arab-Palestinian student within the social and political context of the Israeli universities, is Tajfel's statement that "any society which contains power, status, prestige and social group differentials (and they all do), places each of us in a number of social categories which become an integral part of our self-definition" (1977, p. 66).

Social identity is defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981 p. 255). Social identity theory recognizes the existence of two components of the self-concept: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity contains specific individual attributes such as feeling of competence, psychological traits, and personal values. Social identity on the other hand is derived from ones knowledge and feeling about his or her membership in a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These two aspects of our self-concept are activated within different contexts of social interactions as we move back and forth between relating to other people as individuals in some situations and relating to them based on our respective group memberships in others (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

People have a need to maintain positive social identity (Tajfel, 1981) or positive social self-esteem (Luthanen & Crocker, 1991) in the same manner they tend to enhance their personal or global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Positive collective self-esteem is achieved through a process of social comparison between the in-group and out-groups (Luthanen & Crocker, 1991). People with high collective self-esteem are more likely to be "active in causes and activities involving the enhancement of their in-group's status in society" (Luthanen & Crocker, 1991, p. 230).

Runciman (1966) differentiated between individual relative deprivation and group relative deprivation. Individual relative deprivation is the case when individuals compare their situation to other individuals from their own group. In the case of group relative deprivation, individuals believe that their group is deprived in comparison to other out groups. Group relative deprivation which includes both cognitive and affective components was found to correlate with ethnic identity among Italian immigrants in Australia (Petta & Walker, 1992).

In her research program on ethnic identity development among minority adolescents, Jean Phinney (1989) attempts to develop a model that is "consonant with Marcia's (1980) ego identity statuses, that reflects the stages and issues described in the

ethnic identity literature, and that can be applied across several ethnic groups" (p. 36). Phinney's (1989) model includes three stages. The first is the *unexamined ethnic identity* stage in which minority adolescents "initially accept the values and attitudes of the majority culture, including, often internalized negative views of their own group held by the majority" (Phinney, 1993, p. 66). Second, *ethnic identity search/moratorium* is characterized by a period of exploration into one's sense of ethnic identity which comes after a turning point or a critical incident. Third, *ethnic identity achieved* adolescents demonstrate a clear and confident sense of their own ethnicity. According to Phinney's (1989) model, adolescents move from a stage of unexamined ethnic identity, through a stage of search to ethnic identity achievement.

Population

There are 1,000,000 Palestinians in Israel (20% of total population). There are 6000 Palestinian students attending the 5 major Israeli universities (5.7% of the total student population). The distribution of Palestinian students among the various universities and their percentage is presented in the following table.

University	Total	Palestinians	%
Haifa Universities	13,000	2,500	19.2
Hebrew University	24,000	1,500	6.25
Technion at Haifa	20,000	700	3.5
Ben-Gurion University	13,000	700	5.38
University of Tel-Aviv	35,000	600	1.7

Methodology and Participants

What is reported here includes the qualitative component of a larger research which included a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative research design. This phase of the study included two sets of in depth interviews with purposefully selected samples of Palestinian student activists in the summer of 1996 (n=17) and the fall of 1997 (n=19).

The five main themes that emerged from the first round of interviews provided the bases of the second phase of the study which included more structured interviews with another sample of student activists.

Initial Qualitative Findings

At this point, only the qualitative findings of the study will be reported. Cross-case analysis was conducted on the transcripts by grouping together answers and comments from different participants regarding the same topic. Identification of categories and themes from the first set of interviews followed the procedure of Glaser & Strauss (1967) grounded theory development. The second round of interviews probed more in depth into these emerging themes which provided substantial support for their existence among the student activists. Triangulation and validation of these themes was provided by using content analyses of over 1500 documents collected from the field and participant observation. Following are the main themes identified in the study.

1. Collective Identity Achieved:

Collective-national identity as Arab-Palestinians was perceived by the participants as both the cause of their involvement in student activism and as something which is constructed by the experience of activism itself. National identity was manifested by a strong sense of national awareness and commitment to the Palestinian question, a strong feeling of national pride, perception of national identity as part of the individual's self-concept and behavior of activism. Most participants could be described as collective (or ethnic) identity achieved, who went through a process of exploration and reached a clear and confident sense of their nationality. A small number of participant, especially those who were first exposed to the deep meaning of their national identity in the university are still in the process of search and exploration.

Akram, an education student and active member of the ASC at the University of Haifa explains how he became politically involved:

> If you want to be involved in politics you should have no personal incentives or expectations from that. One should know that one must give material ... I had the feeling that I was a nationalist person and I wanted something to protect and maintain my Arab identity. That's why I became involved in the student movement.

Asked about the importance of being Arab-Palestinian to her self-concept, Khulud, a journalism major, emphasizes the importance of language and history to her identity. She clearly articulates her sentimental attachment to her people and the collective self-esteem derived from that attachment.

> I don't believe that people belong to institutions such as a state to which they pay taxes and receive education and other social services in return. I feel that people belong more to their language. I speak Arabic fluently and I feel that I can express myself best in Arabic. Being an Arab goes back to my language, my civilization, even the Islamic civilization although I am not Moslem. My Palestinian identity means much more to me. Maybe because of the suffering we live through lead us to hold stronger onto our Palestinian identity. In my opinion, and I don't say this to express any superiority over the rest of the Arabs, but I feel that the Palestinians are very, very, very distinct people (sha'b) ... When I dream about things that I want to do in the future with my academic work and career such as speaking in front of a foreign group of people, I feel proud even though my contribution may not be in the form that I want it. I will be proud simply for being a Palestinian and contributing to my people.

2. Inequality and Group Relative Deprivation:

As citizens of the state of Israel, participants perceived that their collective group, the Arab-Palestinian citizens, when compared to the Jewish majority is experiencing institutionalized discrimination, inequality and overall state of relative deprivation. This cognitive perception of relative deprivation was associated with feelings of injustice, anger and frustration which in turn lead to their involvement in political action on behalf of the interests of their group.

Rifat was very detailed in his comparison between the opportunities available to an Arab and a Jewish citizen of the state of Israel.

> There are no equal opportunities for both peoples. We receive much less than the other group. There are lots of examples. Simply for being Arabs there is a significant discrepancy in the budget allowances to the local authorities. We have the same number of people in two localities in the same area but they receive higher budget. Job opportunities for us are very limited. If you take for example an Arab mechanical engineer and a Jewish mechanical engineer, the Jewish engineer has all the opportunities in the world to work in factories which they consider as [security] sensitive places. The Arab engineer does not even have the opportunity to inter these places. There are lots of places to which we are not allowed access.

Asked if he feels that he receives all of his rights as a citizen in the state of Israel, Nassir clearly differentiated between individual rights and collective rights.

> You have to ask the question "what do you really want?" An average person who wants a job, money, care and house can accomplish all that. He can work and things like that and make some money. So many people live like that. But a person who looks for self-definition and national belonging will have a hard time getting a job. As Arabs in this country we have never had the feeling of independence. When I watch other Arab TV stations I see that they all have a national anthem. Look at the Jordanian people, they have their own national anthem and we don't. Materialistic things that we get are not enough. It all depends on what you are looking for. If you are looking for materialistic things it is easy to obtain them. But if you look for cultural and spiritual things, your options are very limited.

3. Party Identification, Membership and Commitment:

Identification with the group (or party) and its political program was evident in most of the participants' responses. Group identity could be viewed as a mediating level of identification between the personal identity (self) and collective identity (society).

Friendships and social interactions were more dominant among in-group members. Furthermore, competition and cooperation among the various political groups was expressed as a function of outside threat in their confrontation with the system. Their political differences and ongoing competition over the support of the general Palestinian student population, have become a secondary issue as their confrontation with the university administration intensified.

Lets consider how two different student activists are equally enthusiastic in their commitment to defend their respective political organization. Erit explains the ideological commitment in her group members:

> I don't believe that anybody had joined Abna al-Balad for personal gains. Even if we talk about changes within 50-60 years that may benefit the masses, no one is that naive to t hink that the situation will change in 5-6 years so they themselves can benefit from it. People who join Abna al-Balad know that they will never get jobs. You go to the university just to get a degree to hang it on your wall. If you are Abna Balad you go through so many police interrogations, lots of troubles, they dismiss you from the university, lots of sacrifice. I worked with lots people who went to jail and got beaten by the police. Every single person in Abna al-Balad joined based on principles and convection. I am positive about that because this involves lots of sacrifice.

Fadi grew up identifying himself with the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, an umbrella organization dominated by the Israeli Communist Party (ICP). Since he came to the university his political affiliation has become stronger.

> I became involved in political work since I was in high school. The Intifada was getting a strong momentum during these years. I wanted to know more so I began reading and asking lots of questions to older people around me. I was young and so eager to know what was happening. From reading and talking to people I found that no single political organization was active among the Arab masses and committed to our issues and national goals as much as the ICP. This is well known fact. Some people attack us and say "what, do you think you are the only group who was active?" Yes there was only the ICP. This is a historical fact. They were the only ones who were active. And also the Democratic Front was the only organization in my town so I joined the ranks of the Front.

4. <u>Nationalism and Feminism in the Women's Voices:</u>

Women student activists expressed awareness and need to address women's issues as part of the political-social agenda of their student organizations, more so than their male comrades. Being women in a patriarchal society which is also suffering from national oppression as a whole, Arab-Palestinian women activists find themselves advocating both nationalist and feminist agendas at the same time. They also perceived an inherent tension between their national identity as Arab-Palestinians and their gender identity as women and expressed commitment to consolidation between the two.

The complexity of the oppression in the case of Palestinian women is best illustrated in the program of Al-Fanar; The Palestinian Feminist Organization.

> As Palestinians they suffer from oppression and discrimination based on nationality, as women they are dominated by the patriarchal system throughout their lives, and as female workers they are the most deprived sector of the workforse. These forms of oppression do not operate separately, but are intertwined, and clearly influence one another. The liberation of women - as persons with a social, personal, gender, and national identity - requires a simultaneous struggle on many fronts, which cannot be fragmented or conducted in separate stages (1991, p. 1).

By stressing all aspects of oppression as they are manifested in one group's life conditions, it is clear that Palestinian women are calling for the most radical political and social agenda. The contradiction between revolutionary political consciousness and reactionary social-gender consciousness demonstrated by many Palestinian male activists is still the major dilemma facing Palestinian women activists.

Nadira, has just graduated with a law degree from the University of Haifa and began working on her Masters degree in sociology at the Hebrew University in

Jerusalem. She was in Haifa, her hometown, during the summer to work for her party's campaign in the Knesset elections. She illustrates her frustration about being used as a token for women representation and the party's secretariat.

> I have never felt inferior among other student activists... I began feeling strange when we started to establish al-Tajamu in the community two years ago and I was included as a woman ... I started going to the meetings. Then I started to feeling strange for two reasons. First, because they were all older people and second, I was there as a woman not because I was qualified to be there. It is kind of a ugly feeling to feel that you are there not for what you are and what you know...At some point another woman joined the secretariat and we became two women... I had the feeling that I had to work harder to prove myself.

Dina was raised in a politically active family. She defines herself as a feminist and works both in political groups with men and in all women organizations. She has this to say about the relationship between her gender and national identities:

> I feel very proud of my Arab identity, but at the same time my Arab culture oppresses me as a woman...I don't see culture as something static, we can take what is good and leave what is not working for us.

Asked if she sees any contradiction among Palestinian male activist between their political attitudes and attitudes toward women, she was not even surprised that they themselves don't see the contradiction.

> Palestinian male activists believe it is their role to maintain our national and cultural identity including traditions. They do not see that many of these traditions were there to oppress women at the first place. I don't think that many Palestinian male activists are aware of this contradiction.

5. Personal and Social Development of Activists:

Involvement in student activism was perceived as having a direct impact on the participants' sense of social competence, interpersonal skills and leadership capacities. College experience in general and involvement in student activism in particular were perceived as the most comprehensive experience of political socialization and social development for Arab-Palestinian youth in Israel.

Khalid, a forth year law student in the University of Haifa delineates the impact of students activism on the development of activists:

> In terms of age, it is during the university when we start to establish our political ideas. When you start to build something new you feel that you have reached the stars. You feel that you have accomplished a lot. You still in your peak. When you feel that you have done something important you feel full and complete.

Conclusion

This paper explored the Palestinian educational system in Israel as it relates to their collective-national identity. The conflict between the Palestinian community and the government over the nationalistic content of their educating was not limited to the arena of formal education only. It was shown that when the Palestinian community realized its lacks control over the content of the formal education of its youth, nonformal organizations mushroomed throughout the community to fill the pressing need for building a national identity.

Higher education seems to be the weakest link in the Palestinian educational hierarchy. The selection process for university admission and the economic investment in higher education generally operate against the interests of the Palestinian minority. On the other hand, university education has a remarkable political value for the Palestinian national minority. Despite the obvious repression of their national identity throughout their formal education, Palestinian college students are among the most active segments of the entire community. Their organized involvement in student activism contributes to both their personal growth and development and to their national cause. This process by which Palestinian youth re-assert their national identity proves the ineffectiveness of the "banking model" of education used in Palestinian schools.

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